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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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AN: D790027-1003

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 00573 192156Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 H
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9165

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 573

EXDIS

FOR ASST SECT VAKY

E.O. 12065: XDS-1 1-19-09 (CASTRO, RAUL H.) OR-M
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: (C) CLARIFICATION OF NUMBER OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 0461

1. (C- ENTIRE TEXT)

2. WHEN IS USED THE FIGURE 55 PERSONS DISAPPEARING PER MONTH WITH GENERAL VIOLA I MEANT IT TO BE ILLUSTRATIVE AND I WAS GENEROUS. I WILL ADMIT, IN MY CALCULATIONS. THESE CALCULATIONS ARE BASED UPON: 1) THE NUMBER OF PERSONS ACTUALLY REPORTED TO THE EMBASSY TO HAVE DISAPPEARED; 2) AN ESTIMATED "TIME LAG" FACTOR -- THAT IS, WE ESTIMATE HIGHER FIGURES OF DISAPPEARANCES FOR RECENT MONTHS BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT TIME MUST PASS BEFORE REPORTS FINALLY REACH US FROM FAMILY MEMBERS (OFTEN VIA FAMILIES IN THE UNITED STATES, WHO SUBSEQUENTLY WRITE TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS OR HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS OUTSIDE ARGENTINA); AND 3) AN ESTIMATED "NOT REPORTED TO US" FACTOR -- I.E. WE ESTIMATE DISAPPEARANCES INVARIABLY HIGHER THAN THOSE ACTUALLY REPORTED TO THIS EMBASSY BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT ONLY A PERCENTAGE (WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT PERCENTAGE) ARE REPORTED TO US.

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3. TO ELABORATE ON POINT TWO ABOVE: WHEN WE

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REVIEWED BY *Roschke* DATE *4/24/82*

RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE

TS AUTH ☐ REASON(S)

ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐

DECLASSIFIED ☒ RELEASABLE ☒

RELEASE DENIED ☐

PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

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NUMBERS OF DISAPPEARANCES IN NOVEMBER 1978 (BUENOS AIRES 9209) WE LISTED SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER DISAPPEARANCES REPORTED TO US AT THE TIME AS 22 AND 17. THESE NOW STAND AT 31 AND 23, AND THERE ALWAYS EXISTS THE POSSIBILITY OF COURSE THAT OTHERS WILL BE ADDED LATER.

4. WE REGRET THE "ELASTICITY" OF THIS KIND OF REPORTING, BUT THE FACT IS THAT WHEN WE REPORTED LATE AUGUST DISAPPEARANCES FOR THE YEAR IN PROGRESS (1978 BUENOS AIRES 6527) THE AVERAGE PER MONTH APPEARED TO STAND AT 23. WHEN IN NOVEMBER WE REPORTED JANUARY-OCTOBER DATA (1978 BUENOS AIRES 9209) THE AVERAGE STOOD AT 30.

5. TOTAL DISAPPEARANCES FOR 1978 PRESENTLY REPORTED TO THE EMBASSY STAND AT 450 -- WHICH WOULD APPEAR TO MAINTAIN THE LAST REPORTED AVERAGE OF 30 PER MONTH. DURING NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER HOWEVER ONLY 15 DISAPPEARANCES WERE REPORTED (8 IN NOVEMBER AND 7 IN DECEMBER). REALISTIC ESTIMATES MUST CONSIDER THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUBSEQUENT REPORTS. TO SPECULATE THEN THAT A FINAL AVERAGE MONTHLY FIGURE FOR DISAPPEARANCES IN 1978 WILL BE AT 30-42 DOES NOT, WE BELIEVE, STRETCH THE IMAGINATION-- NOR DOES IT SEEM THAT AN ADDITIONAL PROVISION FOR 13-17 UNREPORTED CASES IS LIKELY TO BE TOO FAR FROM REALITY.

6. FOR AS LONG AS WE CANNOT GET PRECISE STATISTICS-- AND WE HAVE NO IDEA THAT THIS WILL EVER BE POSSIBLE-- OUR ESTIMATES MAY APPEAR TO ERR ON THE SIDE OF HIGH NUMBERS, EVEN THOUGH WE WILL DEFEND THESE ESTIMATES

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AS THE BEST AVAILABLE IN A VIRTUALLY INSCRUTABLE SITUATION. EVEN WHEN WE USE ESTIMATES THAT ARE ON THE HIGH SIDE, HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS, WHO USE DATA THAT WE BELIEVE ARE OFTEN LESS SOLID THAN OUR OWN, MAKE CHARGES THAT WE ARE NOT AWARE OF THE DEPTH OF THE DISAPPEARANCES PROBLEM HERE.
CASTRO

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